

**OH AMSTERDAMMERS! OH AMSTERDAMMERS!**

**by Lee Bridges**

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**literarynewscpa@yahoo.ca**

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OH AMSTERDAMMERS ! OH AMSTERDAMMERS !

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Other books by the author

THE RHYTHM MAN

THE BLUES BIRD SINGS

OH AMSTERDAMMERS ! OH AMSTERDAMMERS !

(a)

Oh Amsterdammers ! Oh Amsterdammers !

what unhardened look and steady eye

voices thundering with honesty

handshakes warm as charcoal fire

why you're really brotherly

But stop

right now

before you slap my back

and grin

because I swear by all the

ghouls of hades

your manners

are as bad as sin

A DUTCH BEAT

He slid outside of the

smoking coffee shop

Uttering & giggling

Before modulating into

AAAAaaaaaaaaoooooooooooo

With the glass facade

Behind him reflecting

Street smarm smiles of

Many improvising on

The very same melody

## IT IS IF IT AIN'T

Folks come from everywhere  
To Amsterdam, to see, to hear  
And to find out if it's really  
True what others say about the  
Excitement of just strolling  
Through the good time district  
Looking at all the pretty young  
Things of every nationality  
Beckoning from behind rouge  
Glass facades, and visit one of  
The numerous sex shops where  
All kinds of paraphernalia and  
Erotic films are on naked  
Display, and you can drop into  
One of the many cafes and bars  
Lesbian, homo, or straight and  
Have a drink of some of the  
Famous Dutch Beer, or visit



## 2. IT IS IF IT AIN'T

One of the much heralded  
' getting high coffe shops '  
WWWWHHHHhhhooooooooooooeee, again  
And the only policemen you ever  
See are the unusually young  
Looking and quite unperturbed  
Men and women in blues two-toned  
Uniforms and, no wonder when  
You get back home you can tell  
Everybody what a good time you  
Had, that is, when you are  
Feeling pretty certain you  
Ain't caught nothing and you  
Ain't become addicted  
To anything

## IN THE 'DAM

A tourist boat mourns as it  
Creeps along in the midst of  
Amsterdam's overcasting acid  
Rains coating grim grey canals  
With passengers eyeing towards  
Red lighting headstones lining  
Grave cobbled streets in search  
Of manifestations of pleasure &  
Excitement with eagerness since  
Earlier having to witness an  
Eerie video-playback-like drama  
Of a lone junky looking dude  
Bobbing & weaving on foul water  
Drenched doorsteps making folks  
Wonder man how could you get  
Yourself hung up into something  
That you can't get out of but  
He'd kept right on looking as

Though he didn't really care if  
Any one day was any different  
From any other

## THE DOPPELGANGERS

(a)

Strung -out into the wilderness  
Frosty figures form glacial  
Apparitions  
Without sight  
Without touch  
Without taste  
Without smell  
Without hearing  
So uncompromising the dragon  
The chase is always  
A beginning without an end

## 2. THE DOPPELGANGERS

(b)

Of spacecrafts farting over a  
Universe where deals are made  
Along any city street even in  
The daytime with guaranteed  
Ways of entering heaven or  
Get your money back

(c)

Or just keep on going until  
The final sun is set  
Within sight  
Within touch  
Within taste  
Within smell  
Within hearing  
And the pursuit has ended  
Finally the beast is dead

## DERELICTION

Of course he was a nobody folks could see it  
For a fact  
Shoes running down in need of heels and, the  
Band was off his hat  
Patched old clothes all crumpling in wrinkles  
Hanging loose like a dirty sheet  
And he sure ' nough looks mighty thin, like  
He could use a bite to eat  
But something else about that man, nary a soul  
Could quite deny  
The face was reminiscent of, a dark past human  
Kind decry  
And when he wanders into view, heads turn as  
Though he makes them sick  
Indeed, it's not difficult determining just  
Who is derelict

## BIG MAMA

We all know the  
Good time ladies  
So businesslike in  
Promiscuity

And, we all know  
It is often chance  
Which enhance many  
A soul in society

Indeed, we have all  
Witnessed the sudden  
Outburst of feminine  
Fury

Feelings, sometimes  
Icebergs, sometimes  
Feelings blue

And, we all know  
Just how great is  
A mother's love and  
What it will make  
Any mama do

## DESTINY DESPISED

Dark evenings  
White rooms glaring  
Chandeliers antediluvian  
Mosaics of splendor  
Iniquitous  
Old mother cosmeticswhore  
Perishing in oceans of  
Sullenness and despair  
Forevermore  
Soft spring skies  
Brown maidens lifting  
Short skirts over the  
Moon though they too  
Shall grow old and  
Die  
Perhaps gracefully

## MODUS OPERANDI

Crying  
A million peoples  
Crying  
Honey blues  
On life's twisting avenues  
Paying dues  
Crying  
A million peoples  
Have never seen a man  
Crying  
With tears flowing from his eyes  
Have never seen a woman  
Crying  
With tears flowing from her eyes  
A million peoples  
Crying

SSSHHHHHheeeeee !

Indeed, it is not always  
Entirely discouraging to  
Learn of the unrelieving  
Problems of others while  
Having to deal, each day  
With one's own emotional  
And, anti-social hangups

OH AMSTERDAMMERS ! OH AMSTERDAMMERS !  
(b)

Oh Amsterdammers ! Oh Amsterdammers !  
strolling along a tree-lined street  
or water centered you call gracht  
makes no difference who I am  
at almost any huis (house)  
I stop  
I'm welcome to share what you've  
got  
inside you do the most  
to make me happy and at ease  
but names remain anonymous  
ignorant I take my leave



## VERNISSAGE

Rappers raging in riffs  
Virgins mascaraed hags stags  
Strutting through smoke-air  
Commemorating old masters  
Mellifluous in immortality  
Every contrariety brags  
Flaunting ego-centered  
Comparisons to some Vincent  
Van Gogh or E.A. Poe or  
Bessie Smith although most  
Voices tend to zigzag  
Resembling cracked ridges  
On worn discs

## SYMPHONY

Did you ever hear  
The saxman playing along with the  
Trumpetman in unison while the  
Pianoman is caressing ivories  
Blending in with the baseman and  
The drummerman and all that  
Rhythm

Real classic  
All that jazz

Like painters ans poets and  
Laughter and fried chicken and  
A blue note

## RHYTHM & BLUES

It was raining in Amsterdam  
The man was glad to be inside the  
Tram altho it was crowded and the  
Melange of fashionable and cheap  
Perfumes made the air almost  
Unbreathable

He looked towards the window, and  
Out, through dirt streaking refuse  
And, he saw, and, he heard and, he  
Could hardly believe..... what?

How weird to see someone standing  
Bareheaded, playing a saxophone to  
The beat of pitter-patter pelting  
Upon an old bowler hat placed with  
Meticulousness on the gleaming  
Sidewalk before him

## 2. RHYTHM & BLUES

He listened, and he felt pretty  
Certain many others had, indeed  
Experienced variations on the  
Theme of that most distressing  
Musical piece

OP de MARKT

(In The Market Place)

Scrawling tufts glisten  
In early morning dew an urchin's  
Brown bare feet pitter-patter  
Cold cobblestones in Amsterdam's  
Open market place with chilling  
Hands clutching a king's ransom  
To a frail ragged chest heaving  
In flight to lofty youner worlds  
Far beyond the roar of  
Imprecations as a thousand arms  
Reach out of antiquity in  
Established order even while  
Trembling fingers drip with  
Putrefaction from  
Overripe bananas

## INTO THE WILDERNESS

" Damn....." groans the ageing well  
Dressed man standing alone in scary  
Approximation of an unsocializing and  
Diminishing populace on the platform  
Of a grimy Amsterdam metro station  
Glowering towards the derelict junkie  
Looking dude waltzing in his direction  
Extending contaminated bone ash hands  
Supplicating in concert with discordant  
Intonations " Sir can you spare a few  
Gulden please " to which the reply is  
Curt and cold as Cain " Man you better  
Get on way from me I ain't got nothing  
For you " in dark overtones of a once  
Powerful & indeed arrogant youthfulness  
Which causes the suppliant to detour

## 2. INTO THE WILDERNESS

Accelerating with pledges crutching  
Over shoulders slump " ' scuse me  
Brother but someday I'm gonna get all  
Clean too... with God's help " And the  
First man began to feel uncomfortable  
Although he kept telling himself that  
Since the very beginning we had all  
Been cast out into the wilderness

WATCH OUT !

Dissension !  
See how they charge ?

The choral brigades  
Singing the same old  
Song

Restraints, repeats  
Inharmonics  
Notes wrong

In every dimension  
Differences belied  
Disintegrations  
Harsh, warlike  
Confrontations  
All reason denied  
On both clean and  
Mean streets

Attention !  
Inflating egos at  
Large

## A MELANCHOLIC SONG

Parched bloody lips  
Despising Adam as all of the  
Cacophonies of humankind grapple  
Throngs everywhere dawns dignify  
Despondency so long as love lies  
In deceit with the international  
Soul singers continuing in agony  
To intone although few heed the  
Supplications of that melancholic  
Song with all of its ailments of  
Irrepressible despair as misery  
Keeps intruding and discordance  
Is prolonged

## SUB-TONES

Hear them.....  
Shaking  
Trembling thoughts  
without care  
imprisoned minds  
crying out in  
despair  
....though many are those  
pretending not to  
stand very  
Near them...  
Raking  
Dismembering  
friends  
dear

## 2. SUB-TONES

and foe alike  
indiscriminately  
what a minivicious  
career  
undignified yet dark roles  
in life easily  
find those who  
Fill them...  
Faking  
Resembling  
saints  
christians  
strutting very  
distinctly on  
God's missions  
and when they begin to sing  
their battle  
songs they  
always shout  
Dear Him  
Making

Assembling

demons

instead

smiling underta-  
kers

glad when that  
rascals dead

really too often fellowmen

give very little

encouragement to

### 3. SUB-TONES

Cheer them....

Shaking

Trembling

Raking

Dismembering

Faking

Assembling

Dear God...

... many fear them.

## FLYING HIGH

Darkening brows decry  
The wonders of light while  
Moments held dear become  
Immersed in fear although  
Increasing mass-media hype  
Certainly makes it quite  
Clear every future is  
Bright unless you're flying  
Way up too high and acting  
All uptight

OH AMSTERDAMMERS ! OH AMSTERDAMMERS !

(c)

Oh Amsterdammers ! Oh Amsterdammers !  
champions of drinking & smoking cafes  
comrades in hashish weed and cognac  
laughter rings out clean and gay  
but damn it learn how to act  
of course  
I know  
you don't mean any harm  
but sides are still aching  
from your elbows and arms  
Lord I hope it isn't so  
but I bet your foot  
has broken many a toe



## THINKING OUT LOUD

In the calm sunny morning  
A soft melodizing magic of an  
Alto saxophone coruscating to  
Deep subtle strains of violins  
Makes you wonder why can't it  
Be like this always instead of  
Having to think about the rent  
Man and the butcher man & the  
Bread man the tax man too and  
The pretty young chick showing  
Off titillating thighs sitting  
Up high behind the counter in  
The coffee shop where you can  
Cop all kinds of good smoke in  
Surprising Amsterdam Good Lord

## 2. THINKING OUT LOUD

You got to get to work and  
Stop getting stoned & hung-up  
Over all the bills you have to  
Pay the car note too & a final  
Installment on the fancy video  
Camera you had bought for the  
Big butt woman who didn't care  
That much about you anyway you  
Would rather be with a classic  
Hot little lady like the space  
Selling mama in the head house  
Where last evening you almost  
Blew your cool & threw a punch  
At the shifty looking dude who  
Stood lusting in her direction  
Disgusting indeed you rememeber

Your coat needs repairing  
Also the television set of  
Which you do not bother trying  
To switch on preferring sounds  
Of the stereo rising up beyond  
The discords of violence & the  
Lamentations of souls striving  
To exist in a harsh world into  
Which you step out wide awake  
To the trying obstreperous  
Rhythms of a brand new  
Every day

## MONKEY BUSINESS

He didn't want to hear about  
Folks telling one another just how  
Bad things are  
    Growing criminal environments  
    Sexual harassments, terrorism  
    Racism, military confrontations  
    And the ever failing peace  
    Conferences and, on and on and.....

And he certainly did not care to  
Talk about  
    The disgusting assortment of  
    Drug addicts, the alcoholism  
    The young prostitutes, or even  
    The homeless... all losers, the  
    List goes on and on unending...

## 2. MONKEY BUSINESS

In fact, he didn't even see  
The light and, apparently  
The bus driver did not  
Immediately become aware of  
His presense, either  
Crossing illegally over the  
Busy city street  
He never knew, and he had not  
Been smoking either

## SONG & DANCE

He kept telling himself that  
He was going to stop smoking &  
He was going to stop drinking  
And using drugs & chasing after  
Women and hanging out all night  
And hardly ever seeing the sun  
Lighting up the sky and indeed  
He was going to get himself real  
Together and stop worrying all  
The time over money too although  
He was beginning to feel more &  
More uneasy to eerie resoundings  
Of artful procrastinations dark  
Haunting monotones in disharmony

## RED LIGHT, GO GREEN

Cheerful,laid back, spirits brighter than  
Autumn rays of gold, then suddenly, one is  
Alone, unloved, cast off without hope into  
Some social stranglehold, an ungodly abyss

So foul. so stealthy and, so outrageous is  
Life's awful turn of fate, a fool is often  
Found in favor, however, none pass through  
Saint Peter's gate, so severe a Judas Kiss

Grim echoing rhyme of mockery and distrust  
Has damn near got the best of us, ensnared  
In the thrust of those racing for parttime  
Salvation, fulfillment is a self sell myth

Still the most adverse souls in reluctance  
Confess, a sad, melancholic song continues  
Nonetheless, refrains by infinite millions  
Ever struggling in a solemn quest to exist

## A WEIRD MELODY

Slam ! Bam ! Wham !

The band plays

deliriously  
bulls belles  
butting heads  
chests bracing  
together like

Lovers

from a distance  
but not lovers

Folks

pushing preying  
human souls

Trampling over each other

Trying to get further

ignorance pride  
and prejudice

Mmmmmmmmaaaaaaaaaaaaa.....swish !

Cows being led to the slaughter  
house.

## 2. A WEIRD MELODY

Good day

Mr. Jones Filet

Bonjour

Monsieur Rosbif

Sadly

Some skulls encase  
vast areas of emptiness  
unexplored  
dark grey yonder worlds  
what grief !

Why it just ain't rhythmic

standing toe to toe  
high class animals  
double barrelled foe  
locked in mortal combat  
each afraid to let the  
    other go  
at last a deep breath  
    of fatigue  
a sigh  
    of death ?

Death !Death ! Death !

Of civilization perhaps

everyday  
the headlines show  
people trying to make  
it that way  
farcial folk, you know  
like old virgins  
contributing even  
less to humanity  
than a whore  
...getting less also

### 3.A WEIRD MELODY

No more ! No more ! No more !  
Now ain't what's playing  
                    out of key  
It ain't got no harmony  
No wonder it's such a weird  
                    melody

### SOMETHING TO HOLD ON TO

Certainly it's true  
The streets are cold

And deep in that sordid pit voices despising  
One the other lose all hope of ever  
Climbing out of it

And if you ain't got no gold  
And dull of wit

The only thing left to lift yourself from that  
Hidious place of woe is that experience teaches  
It's even colder down below

Every dawn is grey  
Each soul is blue  
Melancholy's song modulates into all the  
Sorrows of humankind where hearts in  
Cheerlessness submit

## 2. SOMETHING TO HOLD ON TO

And fleeing moments evanesce into some  
Indefinable dimension like feelings  
When we pray

Wondering if we're getting through

Especially since most folks realize that in  
Neglecting the very thing of which we should  
Give our most devoted attention

Love, blessedness true invention, destroys all  
When we fail to let it flow

Attention !

Careful, we warn ourselves not to fall in  
With that crew  
Losing, lost it all, dying leaves in autumn  
Knowing what is coming, knowing what is due

One has to hold a vision of a warm, caressing  
Sky where the sun is ever glowing and  
Stars are twinkles in the eye

A dream unfit ?

Perhaps, when finally one reaches that long  
Sought safety of a shore

But as the rhythm man says, if you don't want  
To end up in the zoo

You better get something brother, something  
To hold on to.



## TRAVELLERS, ROADS TWIST

Once they saw the same star  
What brilliance  
Love, gaiety and wit  
In eternal bliss  
Spring waters spurting  
Like some virgin  
Maids of gold  
How bright the dawn  
When hearts unfold

## 2. TRAVELLERS, ROADS TWIST

Once they heard the same voice  
Sad dissonance  
Drab, dreary and unfit  
Mourns of what is missed  
And of how hard it is  
To come in from  
The cold  
The weeper's song  
Of souls being sold

And don't you know they never get paid  
Just look at the way most folk get laid  
Into holes in the floor where they 've  
Prayed and prayed  
Signing over this and crying over that  
While taking life as a matter of fact  
And of holes in the floor where they 've  
Prayed and prayed

Once they touched the same women  
Discontinuance  
Indeed, the truth of it

So few can resist  
A whore's naked thigh  
A mother's sweet  
Endearing kiss  
The tale never grows old but  
Travellers, roads twist

GUESS WHAT  
' thereby hangs a tale '

Ruffled brows seek visions in the dust  
Is that the highest plateau of a dream  
While souls weep in agony's sad thrust  
Most whom have as yet gone past a teen

How supreme tradition's shackles bound  
Damning futures to some beguiling past  
Where glory's shielding light is found  
Above the shroud of an aggrieving mass

Far a way up yonder on top of the hill  
In lanes of gold on silver laces peaks  
To that end of beyond is further still  
Not often traversed by the poor & meek

2. GUESS WHAT  
' thereby hangs a tale '

Tho' none doubt it can enrich the till  
Where humankind solely that all to seek  
But wealth alone's unlikely to fulfill  
A heart secure with happiness complete

While believing in richness to survive  
A peoples reliance in land and in self  
Paradoxically it seems as if to divide  
Leaving all in wonder of what is next

## IT'S HAPPENING

Indeed, what a universe of  
Wonder, superstars spiraling  
To-and-fro

Satellites once cringing and  
Mourning, are now exclaiming"  
"Gimme more !"

And whole households gather  
To look forward, unintimidated  
By what they will hear and see

A myriad of worlds, damned in  
Discontent, coarse, street  
Smarts sophistry

Certainly, occasions are very  
Much in evidence, where human  
Trials are quickly put aside

The atmosphere becomes more  
Exciting, simply perusing the  
T.V. Guide

## EXACTLY, MAN

He knew, alright, exactly what  
The folks thought of him...

...the butcher man, the cigarette  
Man, the old woman at the newsstand  
The liquor store man, the bookie  
Man, and the madam who ran the good  
Time house...

...yeah, he knew, alright, exactly  
What they, and all the others,  
Thought of him along the streets of  
His neighborhood

But, what he did not know, however  
Was, what exactly did he think of  
Himself ?

## BUSINESS AS USUAL

One awakes, and looks out  
Over the dawn...

... feelings good, for a  
Little while before  
Remembering that it's just  
Another day to be overcome.

OH AMSTERDAMMERS ! OH AMSTERDAMMERS !

(d)

Oh Amsterdammers ! Oh Amsterdammers !

one more thing and I'll give this up  
why in the hell do you always  
put sugar in my tea and  
coffee cup  
and this is the first time  
that I have ever seen  
bread offered  
saturated  
with butter and  
margarine  
and when I take the tram  
slam bam  
... damn

## A FAMILY HOLIDAY

Ladies and gentlemen  
Fasten your seatbelts, please.....

Aw, man...  
...it was real exciting you and  
Your mother sitting side by side  
Occupying first class seats while  
Cruising all the way from the Big  
Apple to surprising Amsterdam  
Where everything is cool in the  
Late evening when you're strolling  
Along wine colored canals in the  
Good time district and you can  
Look over towards narrow streets  
And see pretty young big butt  
Chicks sitting high way up on red  
Cushioned stools in cosmetic  
Interiors creating a most luscious  
Invite and ever so often you could  
Catch sight of one of the smoking  
Coffee shops & one of each of the

## 2. A FAMILY HOLIDAY

Establishments you visit before  
The night is over all the time  
Thinking man man what a trip !

And in the morning you wake up  
Still feeling good and thinking  
The same thing before remembering  
My God... I forgot about mama !

WWWHHHOOOooooeee !

WWWHHHOOOooooeee !  
Again

WHEW !

A very fine morning, indeed...  
... no television, no radio  
No newspapers...

... no telephone calls, no post  
No pressing bills to pay

No one, certainly no one to  
Speak with while strolling thru  
An isle of green amid a soul  
Darkened sea.

No wonder, looking upwards at  
Last, we're often shocked to  
find the sky, is still in place

## STRUNG-OUT

Many a road we have travelled  
Meeting a lot of people and  
Doing a lot of things.....

Good times...  
... bad times...  
... and, just plain old times  
Like those periods passing so  
Rapidly until you don't  
Remember anything other than  
It was nineteen hundred or  
Something...



## 2. STRUNG-OUT

And ain't it the truth...  
...In all of those years  
There was always somebody  
Somewhere, no matter how hard  
It was to ask, there was always  
Somebody  
A last hand  
A saving grace  
Those who understood, everything

But all the same  
There comes another time when  
There is nobody  
Nothing  
Nothing at all, except some  
Dealer lurking with impatience  
Against the wall of some  
Dead end street

## HUNG-UP

Let me tell you...  
... when you're hanging  
Out there, on the avenue  
Every day, trying to get  
Higher, and higher, and  
Before you know it, the  
Years have flown past and  
You still ain't got high  
Enough to keep from falling  
Down so low until at last  
You begin saying to yourself  
Man, nothing's left, and  
Indeed, a society affirms  
Nothing is

## NO WONDER PARADISE SEEMS LOST

Time's wearing out  
A-sittin' and a-rockin'  
Over achievements when  
It's perfectly clear  
    Hate and fear  
A mother's anguish  
    Bereavements  
Help..! Help ! Help !  
    Again, but  
Minds cool, mind you  
    Vegetating with  
Unexploited potential

## 2. NO WONDER PARADISE SEEMS LOST

Why no doubt  
Paradise seems lost  
Irretrievably in a  
Burst of dawn  
    Godalmighty !  
Demons keep vying  
So and so many today  
Every day  
    A soul flies  
    Unnecessarily  
Every day  
    A baby cries

Yet folks shout  
There is the rainbow  
A light on a dark  
    Ghetto street  
    A naked thigh  
But looking away from  
    The heavens  
What bitter truth  
    Morals lax  
    Outlook obtuse  
And there's not  
    Enough love  
Being spread about

## THE VERDICT

Why it's everywhere...  
... old attitudes cringing before  
The tribunal of present tense  
Being judged patiently and fair  
And severely punished when found  
Guilty, of greed and social  
Malfeasance

Although most plead innocence  
All solemnly swear, from the very  
Beginning there was violence  
And mistrust  
Lust !  
How it contorts a countenance  
Strangling souls of common sense  
From dawn to dusk  
Nights an eternal concatenation of  
Scheming and pretense, and, as  
Consequence, increases  
Disappointment and disgust

## 2. THE VERDICT

But at last the entire incidence  
Is being considered by an impartial  
Mixed jury and, in spite of all  
Emotional fury, pure spiritual unity  
Will declare, the issue with  
Thought intense

The verdict, however, we must  
All share

## IT'S THE TRUTH

And they came from all around to look at it  
And they began to laugh  
And how they laughed & laughed & laughed

Then quietly in solemn dignity it looked  
About and  
Noticing that all of them were laughing  
Every single one of them from  
Every single point of view were  
Laughing and laughing and laughing  
It lifted its voice and joined in laughter  
With them

Suddenly they cursed and began to observe  
Each, one the other from  
The corner of an eye

## EVERY DAY

Some folk swear it's tough  
Being out there on the run  
But every day you wake up  
Means that every day is won

OH AMSTERDAMMERS ! OH AMSTERDAMMERS !

(e)

Oh Amsterdammers ! Oh Amsterdammers !

I have no wish to criticise  
and I shall not apologize

but

of all the peoples of Europe  
whom I like so much

I have met none more friendly  
than the Dutch

Oh Amsterdammers ! Oh Amsterdammers !

Nor with manners  
as such

.